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Flash-flood alert in Perlis, Kedah

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KANGAR: The Meteorological Department has declared a red alert in Perlis following intermittent and heavy rain which has caused many low-lying areas to be up to two metres in water.

Although there are no casualties, flooding could worsen as the water levels at the rivers and Timah Tasoh dam have breached the alert level.

A red alert is declared if forecasts indicate flooding in low-lying areas, especially near rivers, swift water currents which can be dangerous to children and boats, and danger of thatched or zinc roofs being blown away.

At press time, more than 1,400 people from five villages in Til Tinggi, Wang Kelian, Batu Bertangkup, Pangas Berseri and Kampung Haku were evacuated to higher grounds after water overflowed river banks and were almost shoulder-high.

Except for the Kangar-Padang Besar trunk road, most smaller roads to the popular tourist destination near the Malaysia-Thai border were closed.

Perlis Water and Irrigation Department director Nishad Mohamad Shafie said the water levels at Timah Tasoh dam and the two main rivers, Sungai Jarum and Sungai Pelarut, reached critical levels since mid-day Sunday.

The water level at the dam was 29.8m, about 0.2m above the danger level.

This has forced the department to release water from four floodgates at the dam at 8pm on the same day.

Nishad said if the rain clouds do not clear up soon, the department would be forced to open six more floodgates at the dam.

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Md Isa Sabu said the state was experiencing one of the worst floods since 2005.

He said Bintong was also flooded, an area that had never been flooded before.

He added that if the flood situation persists, it was expected to hit Kan-

gar and the south of Perlis.

In Kedah, a red alert has been issued for Kubang Pasu and Padang Terap districts after more than 1,700 people from 320 families were forced to evacuate their homes since yesterday.

A spokesman, attributing the intermittent-to-heavy rain situation to the inter-monsoon changes, said the residents in Padang Terap were evacuated after the water level at Sungai Kuala Nerang reached 19.5m, about 2.5 metres above the danger level.

He said if precipitation continued, flashfloods could affect neighbouring districts such as Kota Setar and Pokok Sena.

Meanwhile, the North-South Expressway at Km10.5 near Changun was closed from 2pm yesterday after it was about a metre under water.

This has forced many motorists, including parents intending to visit their children's graduation at Universiti Utara Malaysia in Sintok, in Kubang Pasu, to find temporary accommodation at the nearby Naka and Naphi towns.



Kampung Panggan Besar villagers evacuating their houses yesterday. — NST picture by Rizal Brann